

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 15-49
Proposed Expansion of McIlwaine Road Park and McDowell Creek Greenway in Huntersville

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The County would like to acquire Tax Parcel 015-081-03 (+/- 52.55 acres) that is located between Gilead and McIlwaine Roads in the Town of Huntersville. The property is vacant and zoned TR (Traditional Residential) under the Huntersville's Zoning Ordinance. The property represents an expansion of the property which the County acquired in 2012 and 2013 (Mandatory Referrals MR12-10 and MR13-17) for the future development of a regional park. The County existing parkland known as McIlwaine Regional Park totals 137.89 acres. Acquisition of this property will expand the park to 190.44 acres. In addition to expansion of the park, the property will fill gaps along McDowell Creek for McDowell Creek Greenway as well as serve as protection for high quality natural areas.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The County would like to acquire the property to add to the existing property for the future development of McIlwaine Regional Park. County Park and Recreation defines regional parks as being both active and passive in nature. Amenities that can be found at a regional park include, but are not limited to tennis and basketball courts, softball/baseball fields, multi-purpose fields, shelters, playgrounds, walking trails, recreation centers, aquatic centers, and specialty facilities that offer an all-day experience within no more than 20 minutes driving time of all residents within the County. In addition to adding to the regional park, Park and Recreation has plans to build a greenway trail along the creek at the northern edge of the property that will extend McDowell Creek Greenway. Mecklenburg County Storm Water also has a project to do a stream restoration project along McDowell Creek in Huntersville. Acquisition of this parcel is critical to storm water undertaking that project. Park and Recreation has also determined that the property contains several high quality plant and animal life species that the County will protect as part of the County natural areas preservation mission.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Acquisition of this property is consistent with the County's *Park and Recreation Master Plan*. All of the amenities offered at the County's regional parks were listed among the top ten desires by residents within the County during the master planning process for parks. Additionally, citizens within the County identified greenways as their top recreation desire. Acquisition of the property is also consistent with the County's goals of protect natural habitat and improving the quality of the County's creeks and streams.

Additionally, the proposed action is consistent with the Town of Huntersville *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* that supports the need for additional passive and active park land in the southwest area of the town; adding this parcel will continue to help meet that identified need. Trails were also identified as the number one requested amenity in the town's *Master Plan*. The addition of the proposed property to the park will allow for the extension of the proposed McDowell Creek Greenway from Gilead Road to Beatties Ford Road, which aligns with the *Huntersville Greenway Master Plan*.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The Town of Huntersville's *Beatties Ford Small Area Plan* recommends an Active Use Park adjacent to the proposed Vance Road Extension; acquisition of the parcel will add to the McIlwaine Regional Park, which is along the proposed Vance Road Extension. Acquisition also supports the implementation strategies outlined in the *Beatties Ford Small Area Plan*, specifically:

- Leveraging and facilitating acquisitions by the County for public parks, greenways and nature preserves.
- Working closely with Park and Recreation Department, the Mecklenburg County School Board and other agencies to expand recreational lands and services.

The proposed acquisition and resulting land use is therefore consistent with the *Beatties Ford Small Area Plan*.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of this property takes this property out of play for future development and contributes to fulfilling the requests from County residents for additional opportunities for park and recreation amenities.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Acquisition of this property has no known impact on any other public or private projects, other than the aforementioned storm water project.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Acquisition of the property is anticipated to be completed by the late fall 2015 or winter 2016.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

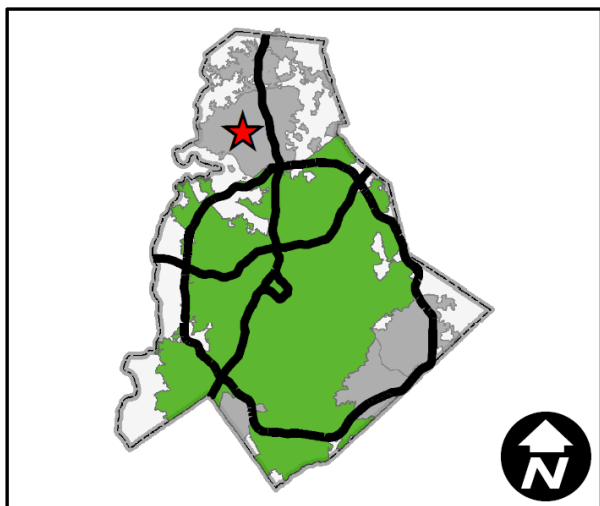
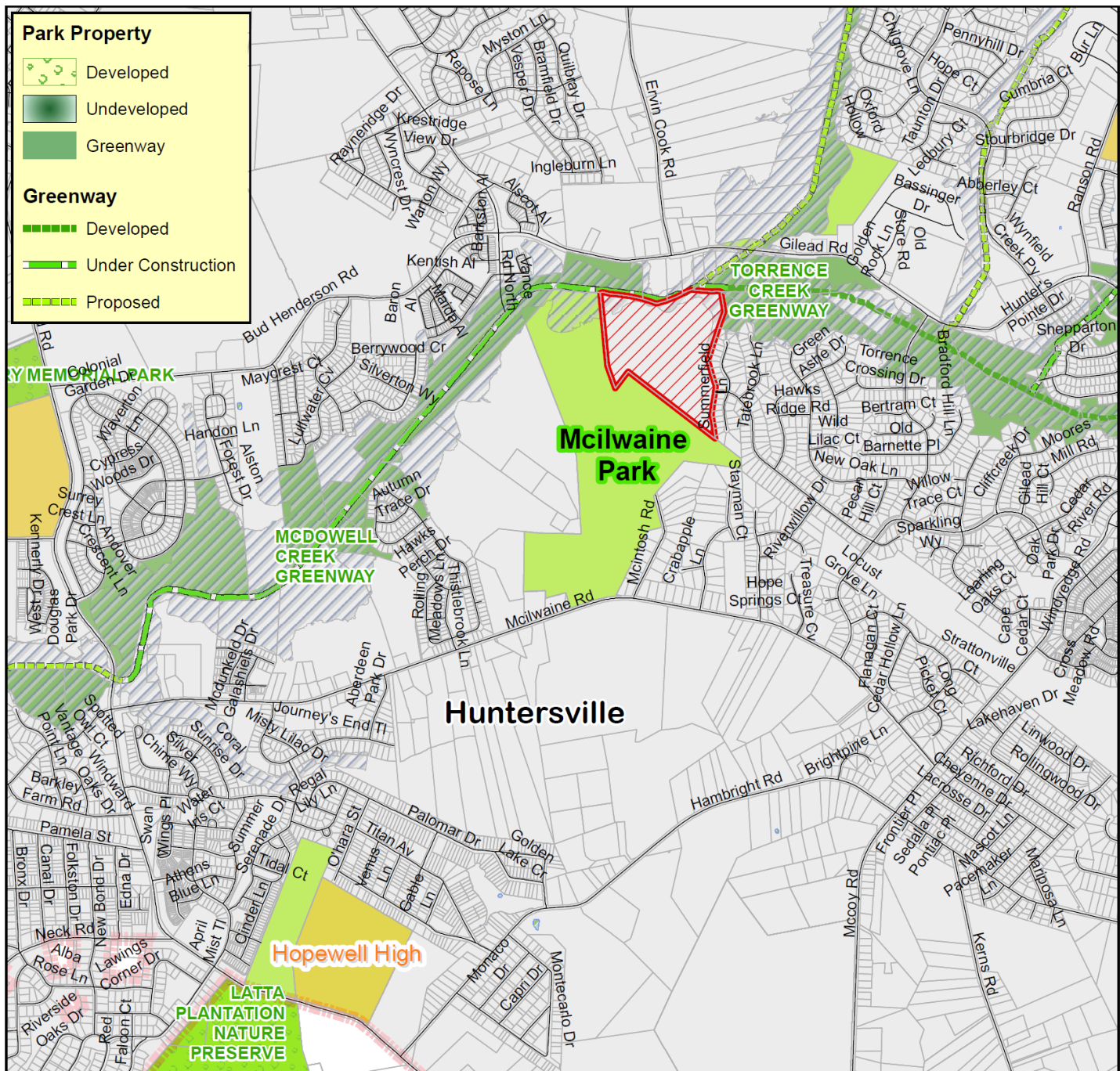
The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at their October 7, 2015 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Inasmuch as this property is within Huntersville's planning jurisdiction and Huntersville staff favors it, Planning staff recommends approval.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their October 20, 2015 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 15-49

Initiated by: Park & Recreation

Submitted by: County Asset & Facility Management

- Mandatory Referral
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain
- Schools
- County Property

